

ON THE HOME FRONT

What a turn up! After 14 Berger Isthmian League games without a win, Carshalton confounded their critics with away victories against two of the strongest sides in the competition — a timely two fingered salute to the prophets of doom. However, victory was not achieved in the match from which some dared to think 3 points might be gained. Staines had themselves become a rather more self-assured looking outfit since our last encounter in August and the Robins had twice to come from behind to grab a point.

All supporters must have sauntered into the office, factory or classroom in a somewhat light-headed state last Monday week, Carshalton having won 2-0 away to Wycombe Wanderers two days previously to record their first league win of the season. If this result was greeted with amazement in some quarters, further shocks were in store when Carshalton followed that up with an excellent 2-1 win at Leatherhead.

The Robins have suffered much vocal criticism (even more than usual) this season and a satisfying joy wells up in this pen to be able to report two highly

meritorious and thoroughly deserved victories. Injuries and loss of form have meant that the Carshalton team has suffered frequent changes. Now with a more settled look to the team (although Gary Allen took a knock at Wycombe) it seems as if Carshalton have turned the corner. Tony Coombe and Steve Bangs were drafted back into the defence and against Wycombe and Leatherhead produced probably their best displays for the club. Not that these two were by any means the only heroes of these memorable battles.

Last-gasp goal earns a point

SUTTON UNITED 1; WYCOMBE WANDERERS 1

A GOAL at the start and at the finish lifted this Berger Isthmian League, Premier Division, match from out of the rut at Gander Green Lane on Saturday.

The stuff in between the slices of goalmouth action was edible but hardly appetizing. Play too often centred around the middle with neither side able to make proper use of the wide open flanks.

Sutton went closest to gaining the upper hand but Bobby Southam on the left and Terry Dibble on the right persisted in cutting in rather than out. When they did get to the by-line they caused Wycombe all sorts of problems as Terry Harris and Norman Milne fought to meet the crosses.

Otherwise it was a battle for midfield supremacy. Tommy Sampson impressed for Sutton in the first half with substitute Gavin Fraser adding second-half power when he came on for Southam with 30 minutes to go.

Certainly Sutton deserved a draw despite trailing for 85 minutes to a John Rains own goal. Wycombe defender and long-throw specialist Paul Birdseye was the creator with the first of many troublesome throws to the near post.

Keeper Dave Collyer, who had an uncertain afternoon, looked slow to come and Rains could only head the ball into his own net — giving Wycombe a surprise lead after just 60 seconds.

Despite their high league placing, Wycombe looked a very average outfit and, despite the setback, it was lowly Sutton who looked the side nearer to the top.

Southam and Harris both went close with headers before Norman Milne produced his first piece of magic. From a Sampson break Milne beat two defenders before hitting a post with the keeper well beaten. But the ball rebounded to the grounded Peter Spittle who gathered before Harris could pounce.

Goalmouth activity was at a premium but still it was Sutton who provided the excitement as Dibble pushed wide in the second half to open the game out. Rains headed just over before Wycombe launched their first serious attack.

This time it was Collyer who enjoyed a slice of luck when Mick Hollifield's surprise ground shot hit the post, the rebound bouncing off Collyer's head for a corner.

With just four minutes to go, Sutton deservedly drew level with the goal they had been threatening for so long. Spittle failed to punch clear, a Paul Jablonski corner and there was centre-half Dave Dyer to head powerfully back into the top corner of goal.

Sutton — Collyer, Waldon, Jablonski, Rains, Dyer, Sampson, Dibble, Pritchard, Milne, Harris, Southam. Sub.: Fraser for Southam.

Wycombe — Spittle, Birdseye, Davies, Hardwick, Phillips, Allanson, Priestley, Hollifield, Evans, Kennedy, Long.